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Letter dated 28 September 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by Her Excellency Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic, on 24 September 2010 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(*Signed*) Mark Lyall **Grant**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of the Argentine Republic in the general debate on 24 September 2010

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the islanders so wish.

The British Government attaches great importance to the principle of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That principle underlies our position on the Falkland Islands.

The United Kingdom's relationship with all its overseas territories is a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of each territory, including the Falkland Islands, to determine if it wishes to retain a link to the United Kingdom.

The democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands once again expressed their own views clearly when they visited the United Nations for this year's debate in the Special Committee of 24. They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other people, were entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. They reiterated the historical facts that the Falkland Islands had no indigenous people and that no civilian population was removed prior to their people settling on the Islands over eight generations ago. They confirmed that they are and have been the only people of the Falkland Islands, and they did not wish for any change in the status of the Islands.

The Falkland Islands Government is entitled to develop a hydrocarbons industry within its own waters. Article 1.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights supports this right. It states that all peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

The United Kingdom notes that the Government of the Republic of Argentina has announced plans for hydrocarbons exploration in the South Atlantic. Both the Falkland Islands Government and the Government of the Republic of Argentina have environmental responsibilities related to their exploration. The Falkland Islands Government takes its responsibilities very seriously. It has funded external reviews of assessments by United Kingdom institutions such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS). The Falkland Islands Government has also sought the expertise of the United Kingdom's Department of Energy and Climate Change, Health and Safety Executive and British Geological Survey to regulate the environmental impacts and health and safety of all offshore hydrocarbons exploration. These environmental and safety standards are the same as those required in United Kingdom waters and are some of the most rigorous in the world.